Next, the establishment of urban and rural municipal councils permits financial decentralization. Towns under the term "urban communes," cantons, and sometimes whole subdivisions under the term "rural communes," received a legal character, with a domain to manage and a budget to fix. Elected councilors under an appointed mayor had to study plans for road works, to set up construction or maintenance programs, inquire into taxes? /taxes/ and assessments /imp^ts/, and have an eye to a sound financial position.

In towns this was nothing new, but its extension to wide rural areas was an experiment. Boulou or Beti country, where there was no risk of these new methods giving offense to a strong traditional /social/ structure, was the ideal place for trying out a new /kind of/ organization.

Throughout the elections arranged to fill the posts of councilor, we can see crystallizing the most striking traits of the new élite, the characteristics of the aristocracy or oligarchy that will get itself into power.

Pessimists had expressed fear that such elections, based on almost universal suffrage, would overthrow the classical social values and impair the prestige of the present acting élite.

This point of view disregarded the fact that in a country practically without stratification, no one can keep authority without the support of public opinion. /132/ Granting the vote to vassals in a feudal society may unsettle the power of the nobility. It is quite otherwise here, where chiefs of village or canton are most commonly chosen by election.

The older men have preserved a privileged position vis-à-vis the younger generation. A comparison of the age pyramid of councilors with that of the adult male population as a whole readily shows this: (table on following page).

The younger generation is poorly represented. Mature men of thirty to forty are represented in proportion to their ratio in the total population; but men of forty to fifty or of the older age group are heavily represented. Electoral influence has not been seized by the younger men.

Neither does it appear that the poorer class, more numerous than the rich, has benefited from the ballot so as to eliminate the latter. From the point of view of the possession of a certain amount of wealth, we can assert that municipal councilors are much better off than the common people.

888
162
561
623

Distribution by Age

Age Group	Elected Municipal Councilors	Total Adult Male Population (1) (Nyong-and-Sanaga)
	Percent	Percent
20 to 30 years	9	26
30 to 40	33	29
40 to 50	37	28
Over 50	20	15

1. Evaluation made according to censuses established by the subdivisions; the documentation is not faultless but nevertheless is indicative.

556
162
623

The figures given below for the whole population are not definitive, but as they have been taken from a recent complete census they may be considered good approximations.

Distribution of External Signs of Wealth
(for 100 persons)

	Masonry Houses	Bicycles	Automobiles
	Percent	Percent	Percent
Municipal councilors	27	50	11
Adult male population of Ebolowa	1.4	21	0.3

[622]
915
623

Not for nothing do the Pahouin use the word nkukuma (rich) to designate a chief. The chosen leaders are the rich men. /133/

A study of the matrimonial situation enables us to be more specific about the personal characteristics of elected men. Polygamy is much more common among them than among the population as a whole.

6: Alexandre and Binet--169 G-5 (1946-1954) 1958 FH9 Fang FH9

595
623

Distribution According to Matrimonial Status

	Municipal Councilors	Sample of the Total Population of the Boulou and Beti Area (1)
	Percent	Percent
Polygamous	43	23
Monogamous	43	63
Unmarried	3	14

1. A random sample taken for the study of family budgets, 1954, op. cit.

[883
556

That councilors are often polygamous is to be explained in terms of their relatively advanced age and their wealth.

623
463

As elderly possessors of wealth and polygamous, do the elected men embody all the traditional ways in contrast to a progressive younger generation? An examination of occupations, of educational level, and of religion reveals that the actual situation is more complex.

Distribution by Occupation

	Municipal Councilors	Adult Male Population of the Nyong and Sanaga Region (2)
	Percent	Percent
Chiefs	30	1.8
Planters	30	85
Office-holders	14	0.5
Trade employees	3	1
Traders	10	7
Craftsmen	5	?
Catechists, mission monitors	2	2.3

2. According to the annual administrative report; approximations are involved, Yaoundé-Ville being excluded.

6:Alexandre and Binet--170 G-5 (1946-1954) 1958 FH9 Fang FH9

G23 If we set up an index of electoral power based on the percentage in councils and the percentage in the total population, we come to the conclusion that office-holders are very much on top (70). Chiefs come next (17), then trade employees (3), and traders (1.4). Distribution in terms of educational level confirms the influence of educated people /intellectuels/ that could be guessed at from the occupational table. /134/

Distribution by Educational Level

	Municipal Councilors	Adult Male Population of Nyong and Sanaga Region
	Percent	Percent
Illiterate	10	75
Literate in local language	9	?
Literate in French	60	17
Holders of the C.E.P. *	10	8 (1)
Holders of higher diplomas	2.4	0.3
Worthless figures **	8	--

1. The regional statistics give "primary completed," not "C.E.P."; the nuance may mean a great deal. A survey of the urban population of Ebolowa gives a lower rate: 6.4 percent of certificate-holders.

/*Certificat d'études primaires, certificate of primary education./

/**Ambiguous: Fiches inutilisables may refer to the quality of the statistics or to the use of meaningless initials after an individual's name. —Tr./

The tremendous influence of holders of higher diplomas is obvious, so that uneducated people are almost eliminated, although they are still numerous.

Thus this new élite crystallizing out of the muni[illegible] elections appears to be made up of men who are both traditionalist and modern.

6:Alexandre and Binet--171 G-5 (1946-1954) 1958 FH9 Fang FH9

The men who compose it, older men, rich, practicing old-fashioned polygamy, have had an academic training. We must not be deceived —in this country there is no real gulf between office-holders and chiefs.

Thus municipal councils can allow an élite class to rise to the surface and assume responsibilities.

2. The Pahouin and the Future

Shaped by their history, the Pahouin owe to it their positive qualities and their defects.

From having been conquerors, or more accurately, from having been successful in establishing themselves in new lands, they have retained a certain pride and self-confidence. Without being violently xenophobic, they preserve toward foreigners a friendly but the least bit contemptuous attitude, such is their feeling of superiority.

They had the good fortune to have been exposed very early to Christianity and to schools, at least in the Cameroons. Because they are intelligent—tests given to school pupils in the Cameroons show that the Boulou come out on top, along with the Bamoun—they have provided the administration and trade with a large part of their personnel and, when they emigrate, they do not join the unskilled labor force but provide specialized personnel, often salaried workers. This indicates the power of the Pahouin.

Finally, thanks to cacao, they have acquired a certain amount of wealth and live in some degree of comfort. This indicates their basic role in the economy. It also indicates their influence upon local finance. In the Cameroons as in Gabon, the Pahouin country is a rich area, whose exports and imports supply a significant portion of the economy. /135/ The Pahouin, therefore, play an essential role in the life of these territories, and they are able to obtain superior services for their region. There are already many roads, schools, and dispensaries.

But their traditional lack of organization impedes them in certain occupations. They despise trade and are only moderately successful in it, because their natural anarchy does not dispose them toward taking advantage of partnership or of market organization. The absence of urban centers is even more of an obstacle: the town is a new phenomenon, where immigrants are numerous and have been able to create stable situations for themselves, since there were no precedents.